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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: RESPONSE TO HEAD OF THE  
OSCE OFFICE IN ZAGREB AMBASSADOR FUENTES

Post is authorized to present the following statement at the  
March 6 Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.

Begin text:

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to welcome Ambassador Fuentes to the Permanent  
Council for the first time in his new capacity as Head of the  
OSCE Office in Zagreb.

We thank Ambassador Fuentes for his detailed report. As the  
report points out, Croatia,s progress in implementing  
several areas of the previous mandate allowed us to close the  
Mission and open the Office with a very limited new mandate.

The United States hopes that the tasks of this new mandate  
will be completed by the end of this year and that the Office  
will therefore be able to conclude its work.

For that to happen, the Office must focus its activities  
clearly on the two points in its mandate: monitoring war  
crimes cases and reporting on residual aspects of the  
implementation of the housing care program.

We note in this respect that the last two fortnightly reports  
contain items not related to the mandate ) the gender  
equality law and the election process. While we do  
understand the desire to track outcomes from previous work,  
we would like to see a focus on reporting on specific items  
in the Office,s mandate.

We commend the Office for the fine work it is continuing to  
do on monitoring war crimes cases. We would also encourage  
the Office to focus on providing more training for Croatian  
civil society, in order to build capacity for domestic  
monitoring after the Office closes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

End Text.  
RICE